

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A scanning optical system, comprising:

a plurality of light sources that emit a plurality of light beams ~~a light source that emits a light beam;~~

a polygon mirror arranged to rotate about a rotation axis and having a reflection surface parallel to said rotation axis, said light sources being arranged to emit said light beams toward a substantially single point defined in a vicinity of said reflection surface of said polygon mirror, said light beams being distributed symmetrically with respect to a main scanning plane, said main scanning plane passing through said single point and being perpendicular to said rotation axis of said polygon mirror, said reflection surface deflecting said light beams ~~beam~~ so as to scan said light beams ~~beam~~ on different photoconductive drums ~~an object surface;~~

an image forming optical system disposed between said polygon mirror and the different photoconductive drums ~~object surface~~ to converge the light beams ~~beam~~ deflected by said reflection surface on the different photoconductive drums ~~object surface;~~ and

a light shielding member disposed between said polygon mirror and said image forming optical system, said light shielding member blocking a ghost light reflected by another reflection surface of the polygon mirror located adjacent to the reflection surface

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deflecting the light ~~beams~~ ~~beam~~, said ghost light being generated by said image forming optical system partially reflecting said light ~~beams~~ ~~beam~~ toward the polygon mirror.

2. (Original) The scanning optical system according to claim 1, wherein said light shielding member is an opaque plate.

3. (Original) The scanning optical system according to claim 2, wherein said opaque plate is disposed perpendicular to an optical axis of said image forming optical system.

4. (Currently Amended) The scanning optical system according to claim 2,
wherein said light ~~beams are~~ ~~beam~~ is scanned on the different photoconductive drums
~~object surface~~ in a main scanning direction, and
wherein said opaque plate is disposed in parallel to said main scanning direction.

5. (Currently Amended) The scanning optical system according to claim 1, wherein
said light shielding member is disposed out of a beam scanning area within which said light
~~beams are~~ ~~beam~~ is to be scanned by said polygon mirror.

6. (Currently Amended) The scanning optical system according to claim 5, wherein said light shielding member is disposed such that one end thereof is located within an area surrounded by said reflection surface deflecting said light ~~beams~~ beam, said beam scanning area, and an area within which said ghost image reflected by said another reflection surface is to be scanned.

7. (Canceled)

8. (New) The scanning optical system according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of light sources comprises an even number of said light sources.

9. (New) The scanning optical system according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of light sources comprises four of said light sources.

10. (New) The scanning optical system according to claim 1, further satisfying the following condition:

$$\gamma = 2\pi - \alpha - 2(N-2)\pi/N;$$

wherein γ is an angle defined between an optical axis of said image forming optical system and the ghost light reflected by said another reflection surface of the polygon mirror,

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α is an angle defined between the optical axis of said image forming optical system and the light beams incident on said reflection surface of the polygon mirror, and N is the number of reflection surfaces of said polygon mirror.